

**Pre-Assembly Workshops 2011 –“Christ in us all: Building an intercultural church”
Organized by the Elders Institute, St. Andrew’s Hall, Vancouver School of Theology
Saturday, June 4, 2011
Lunch Hour Presentation by
Lori Ransom, Healing and Reconciliation Program Animator**

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION: WHAT IT MEANS FOR RULING ELDERS

GOOD AFTERNOON.

IT IS A GREAT HONOUR AND A PRIVILEGE TO ADDRESS YOU DURING THIS LUNCH HOUR ON THE THEME OF HEALING AND RECONCILIATION WITH THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF CANADA—AND WHAT THE WORK OF HEALING AND RECONCILIATION MEANS FOR RULING ELDERS.

AS AN ALGONQUIN INDIVIDUAL, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I BEGIN MY REMARKS BY ACKNOWLEDGING WITH THANKSGIVING OUR OPPORTUNITY TO COME TOGETHER FOR THIS PRE-ASSEMBLY WORKSHOP AND FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF IN THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY OF THE ONEIDA OF THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY . . . AS WELL AS OF THE DELAWARE AND CHIPPEWA PEOPLES, ALL OF WHOM RESIDE ON RESERVES LOCATED JUST SOUTH OF LONDON, NOT TO MENTION THE MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WHO NOW CALL LONDON ITSELF HOME.

I AM EXCITED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ABOUT THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF RULING ELDERS IN RELATION TO OUR JOURNEY OF HEALING AND RECONCILIATION IN CANADA.

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA MADE A PROMISE TO GOD, AND TO INDIGENOUS CANADIANS, TO WALK WITH THEM TO FIND HEALING AND WHOLENESS TOGETHER AS GOD'S PEOPLES IN OUR CONFESSION OF 1994—SOME 17 YEARS AGO.

AND IN 2008, PRIME MINISTER HARPER APOLOGIZED, ON BEHALF OF ALL CANADIANS, TO SURVIVORS OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND THEIR FAMILIES, PROMISING THAT ALL CANADIANS ARE JOINING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ON THE JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION.

THAT SAME YEAR, THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA BEGAN ITS WORK.

THIS COMMISSION IS NOT SIMPLY A GOVERNMENT COMMISSION. IT IS AN ANGLICAN COMMISSION. IT IS A ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMISSION. IT IS AN ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS COMMISSION. IT IS AN INUIT TAPIRIT KANATAMI COMMISSION. IT IS A UNITED CHURCH COMMISSION. IT IS A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS' COMMISSION. AND IT IS A PRESBYTERIAN COMMISSION. ALL OF THESE PARTIES SIGNED THE AGREEMENT WHICH GAVE THE COMMISSION ITS MANDATE. SO ALL OF US HAVE A STAKE IN, AN INTEREST IN, AND A RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMISSION'S SUCCESS.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION HAS A MANDATE TO, AS FORMER NATIONAL CHIEF AND CO-CHAIR OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES, GEORGES ERASMUS SAID, TO RE-SHAPE THE COMMUNITY OF CANADA, IN FACT TO TRANSFORM THE WAY WE THINK OF OURSELVES—TO BORROW A PHRASE FROM ANOTHER APOLOGY GIVEN IN 2008 TO AUSTRALIA'S ABORIGINES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS.

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ERASMUS SAID, THAT “WHERE COMMUNITY IS TO BE FORMED COMMON MEMORY MUST BE CREATED . . . IN BEARING WITNESS TO WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE, [THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION] WILL HELP TO CREATE COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND SHARED HOPE, THAT WILL BENEFIT ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA LONG INTO THE FUTURE.

CREATE COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND SHARED HOPE.

THE TRUTH-TELLING ASPECT OF THE COMMISSION’S MANDATE ADDRESSES THE GAPS IN OUR COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING AS CANADIANS OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ERA.

AS MEMBERS OF A CHURCH WHICH RAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE, IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE, OF WHAT HAPPENED, AND A STORY THAT NEEDS TO BE TOLD, INCLUDING TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ABOUT OUR INVOLVEMENT.

BUT WE ALSO NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE FIRST NATIONS’ EXPERIENCES OF THE SCHOOLS: AND NOT ONLY OF THE SCHOOLS, BUT ALSO OF THE IMPACT OF THAT EXPERIENCE ON THEIR LIVES AND COMMUNITIES.

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MANY OF THE PROBLEMS THAT WE STILL SEE BEDEVILLING FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE MORE REMOTE PARTS OF OUR PROVINCES, SUCH AS SUBSTANCE ABUSE, SUICIDES, FAMILY BREAKDOWN AND FUNDAMENTALLY A SENSE

OF HOPELESS—MUCH OF THESE ILLS CAN BE QUICKLY TRACED TO THE IMPACT OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS.

OF COURSE, THE STORY OF FIRST NATION, INUIT AND METIS PEOPLES AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER CANADIANS IS BROADER AND MORE COMPLEX THAN THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL STORY. AND IT IS THE ENTIRE RELATIONSHIP THAT NEEDS TO BE DEALT WITH IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE RECONCILIATION.

I AM SOMETIMES ASKED, HOW LONG WITH RECONCILIATION TAKE? WILL THE TRUTH COMMISSION GET US THERE?

FROM THE THREE COMMISSIONERS, TO ANYONE WHO HAS WORKED ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES IN CANADA, AND I'VE SPENT ALMOST A QUARTER CENTURY, 25-YEARS, MORE THAN HALF OF MY LIFE, DOING SO, THE ANSWER IS HARD TO PREDICT, BUT WE ALL AGREE IT WILL REQUIRE WORK FAR BEYOND THE FIVE-YEAR MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION, GIVEN THE GENERATIONS OF DAMAGE DONE.

WHEN THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION FINISHES ITS WORK IN 2014, ALL CANADIANS WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORK OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION. ALL CANADIANS WILL THEN BECOME TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONERS.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CHURCH AND SPECIFICALLY FOR RULING ELDERS?

AS YOU KNOW, THE RULING ELDERS OF OUR DENOMINATION HAVE MINISTRIES BOTH WITHIN THE CHURCH AND OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH: THE MINISTRIES WE ATTEND TO ON THE SIX DAYS ON WHICH WE ARE NOT OBSERVING THE SABBATH, OR SERVING ON CHURCH COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES.

RULING ELDERS HAVE KNOWLEDGE, CONTACTS, AND INFLUENCE, SOMETIMES INDIRECTLY, AND SOMETIMES VERY DIRECTLY OVER THE LIVES OF FIRST NATION, INUIT AND METIS PEOPLES . . . IN OUR BUSINESS LIVES, WHETHER WE WORK IN GOVERNMENT, IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY, OR THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR, IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS AND LEISURE, IN OUR FAMILY CONNECTIONS, IN OUR COMMUNITIES, AND AT OUR COTTAGES.

RULING ELDERS HAVE ROLES TO PLAY IN HELPING THEIR CHURCHES GET TO KNOW THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES THAT THEY KNOW, IN ENCOURAGING OTHER CHURCH MEMBERS TO DO LIKEWISE, AND IN SUGGESTING CREATIVE WAYS IN WHICH CONGREGATIONS CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT AND GROW IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR INDIGENOUS NEIGHBOURS.

I SUGGEST THAT:

1. RULING ELDERS CAN REFLECT ON WHAT THEY CAN DO TO SUPPORT RECONCILIATION, IN THEIR DAY-TO-DAY MINISTRIES, AT HOME, AT WORK, AND IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS, AND HOW TO CONCRETELY SHOW INDIGENOUS PEOPLES THE DEPTH OF OUR CARE FOR THEM, THAT THEIR LIVES DO MATTER TO US.

2. RULING ELDERS CAN ENCOURAGE AND ORGANIZE EXAMINATION AND REFLECTION , THAT IS SET UP EDUCATION PROGRAMS, IN THEIR CHURCHES ON TOPICS SUCH AS CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RECONCILIATION, THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AND QUESTIONS OF HOW OUR OWN SPIRITUALITY MAY BE DEEPENED THROUGH ENCOUNTERS WITH THE FACES OF GOD REVEALED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.
3. RULING ELDERS CAN USE THEIR INFLUENCE AND DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY ON SESSIONS, IN PRESBYTERIES, SYNODS, AND AT GENERAL ASSEMBLIES TO HELP THE CHURCH DISCERN THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK OF HEALING AND RECONCILIATION AND DETERMINE HOW TO USE OUR GIFTS OF HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO BUILD GOD’S KINGDOM IN CANADA.
4. RULING ELDERS CAN ADVOCATE AND RAISE FUNDS TO HELP PRESBYTERIAN NATIVE MINISTRIES TO THRIVE.
5. AND, RULING ELDERS CAN PLAY DIRECT ROLES IN BUILDING AND TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITIES IN CANADA.

WE ARE CALLED AS CHRISTIANS TO THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION, AS CHRIST RECONCILED US TO GOD, AND GAVE US THE RESPONSIBILITY AND THE PRIVILEGE, AND I HOPE THE JOY OF BEING RECONCILERS WITH OTHERS.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGIAN, JOHN DE GRUCHY, REFLECTING ON HIS OWN COUNTRY’S EXPERIENCE WITH A TRUTH COMMISSION PROCESS, PROVIDES A RATHER STARTLING AND, IF

YOU THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT IT, A VERY ACCURATE SUMMARY OF WHAT THE GOSPEL'S ARE ABOUT IN HIS BOOK, "RECONCILIATION."

DE GRUCHY'S THESIS IS THAT THE GOSPELS ARE ABOUT RECONCILIATION. HE SAYS THAT OUR WORK AS CHRISTIANS IS TO OVERCOME ALIENATION AND ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN GOD AND OURSELVES, BETWEEN US AND OTHER PEOPLES, AND WITH ALL OF GOD'S CREATED WORLD. NOT A BAD SUMMARY.

IN RECENT WEEKS I'VE COME ACROSS TWO STATEMENTS BY PROMINENT CANADIANS THAT EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS WORK.

JAMES BARTLEMANN, THE FORMER LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF THIS PROVINCE, AND A MEMBER OF THE CHIPPEWAS OF MNJIKANING SPEAKING IN FREDERICTON SAID, "CANADIAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE HAVE, IN A SENSE FOR GENERATIONS, NOT WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT THE ISSUES OF NATIVE PEOPLE. THEY CONSIDER THE ROOTS OF ALL THESE ISSUES AS HAVING STARTED BACK LONG BEFORE THEY WERE BORN."

"MAINSTREAM SOCIETY HAS DISCONNECTED FROM THE INJUSTICES AGAINST ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND AS A RESULT, HAVE FAILED TO ENGAGE IN SOLUTIONS TO MANY OF THEIR CHALLENGES.

"THE CHILDREN ARE FORGOTTEN IN ALL OF THIS. [WHILE CANADIANS SEEM APT TO ASSIST CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES] MANY PREFER NOT TO LOOK AT OUR OWN ISSUES."

“I THINK A LOT OF IT IS PURE RACISM,” BARTLEMANN SAID.

AS CHRISTIANS, THESE WORDS DEMAND REFLECTION. THERE ARE INJUSTICES WITHIN CANADA. THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX TYPICALLY RANKS CANADA WITHIN THE TOP TEN COUNTRIES, AND SOMETIMES, *WE’RE NUMBER ONE*, BUT CANADIAN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES, ON AVERAGE, DO NOT MAKE THE TOP 60 IN THAT SAME RANKING.

WHETHER RACISM IS THE ISSUE, AND THIS IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE SUBJECT FOR MANY CANADIANS, I CAN ATTEST THAT MANY CANADIANS HOLD FAST TO SOME CURIOUS ATTITUDES ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SOMEHOW ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH TO HELP THEMSELVES, AS IF EVERYONE IN SOCIETY HAS THE SAME PRIVILEGES OF ACCESS TO GOOD EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, HOUSING, CLEAN WATER, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

MOREOVER, MANY DON’T SEEM TO LIKE THE BASIS ON WHICH CANADA WAS FOUNDED. THEY RESENT THE FACT THAT ABORIGINAL PEOPLES HAVE DISTINCTIVE RIGHTS, WHICH THEY ACQUIRED BY TREATIES AND CONSTITUTIONALLY PROTECTED LEGISLATION, IN RETURN FOR GIVING UP VAST TRACTS OF LANDS AND RESOURCES . . . AND NOT GIVING UP AS MUCH LAND AND RESOURCES AS WAS ACTUALLY TAKEN FROM THEM.

THERE ARE MYTHS OF CONQUEST. CURIOUS MYTHS FOR CHRISTIANS TO ADOPT, AS IF WARS “SETTLE” RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLES. YET, IN POINT OF FACT, THERE WERE NO INDIAN WARS IN CANADA. WE DID SEE UPRISINGS, NOTABLY THE METIS RESISTANCE ON

THE PRAIRIES, BUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CEDED LANDS IN RETURN FOR TREATY PROMISES AND UNIQUE RIGHTS.

WE SHOULD BE PROUD OF THIS HISTORY OF NON-VIOLENT TREATY-MAKING IN HOPES OF PEACEFUL AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND SETTLERS—HOWEVER FLAWED THE RESULT—AND STRIVE TO UPHOLD THE HONOUR OF THE TREATIES. TO UNDERSTAND THIS HISTORY, I COMMEND TO YOUR READING LISTS A NEW BOOK BY J.R. MILLER, ONE OF CANADA’S MOST RESPECTED HISTORIANS, WHO REVIEWS THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF TREATY MAKING IN CANADA IN AN EMINENTLY READABLE BOOK, “COMPACT, CONTRACT, COVENANT.”

THE BOOK REVIEWS A HISTORY POORLY KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD BY CANADIANS. IT CONTRIBUTES TO THE TRUTH-TELLING THAT IS NEEDED AS WE DEVELOP OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF HOW WE HAVE RELATED TO EACH OTHER, THE BASIS FOR THAT SHARED HOPE FOR BETTER RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE.

RECENT IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA ARE NO BETTER SERVED THAN THE AVERAGE CANADIAN SCHOOL CHILD WHEN THEY ARE GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THEY ARE SEEKING CITIZENSHIP.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, WHEN ANYONE BECOMES A CANADIAN CITIZEN THEY ARE ALSO SIGNING THE TREATIES WITH INDIGENOUS CANADIANS, PROMISING TO UPHOLD THESE SACRED COVENANTS BETWEEN PEOPLES, AND TO PROMOTE JUSTICE IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

IN 1996 THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES, SET UP FOLLOWING THE OKA CRISIS TO IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS TO OUR RELATIONSHIP ISSUES, LIFTED UP THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT CHURCHES CAN PLAY IN EDUCATING THE COUNTRY ABOUT RIGHT RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLES AND THE KIND OF COMMUNITIES THAT GOD WANTS US TO CREATE ON EARTH.

OUR THEOLOGIES OF THE OTHER, OF THE GIFTEDNESS OF ALL GOD'S PEOPLES, OF GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL, AND OUR COMMANDMENT TO LOVE EACH OTHER, AS WE HAVE BEEN LOVED, AND AS WE LOVE OURSELVES AND WANT TO BE LOVED ARE ESSENTIAL TO RECONCILIATION. THESE THEOLOGIES ARE MIRRORED IN TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS THEOLOGIES OF THE RELATEDNESS OF ALL BEINGS IN GOD'S CREATED WORLD, OF THE SPIRIT THAT IS AT THE HEART OF ALL RELATIONSHIPS.

THE WORD SPIRIT, USED IN CONNECTION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, LEADS SOME TO FEAR THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE A PAN-THEISTIC WORLD-VIEW. BUT SPIRIT IS THE WORD THAT NEWCOMERS USED TO TRANSLATE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' EXPRESSIONS OF THE SACREDNESS OF THE CREATED WORLD. IF THE TRANSLATORS HAD DARED TO USE "GOD" FOR "SPIRIT" WHEN EXPRESSING HOW INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DESCRIBE THEIR THEOLOGY; WE WOULD HEAR THEM SAY THAT GOD IS AT THE HEART OF ALL RELATIONSHIPS, THAT GOD IS PRESENT IN ALL OF CREATION, THAT GOD IS IN THE TREATIES, AND THAT WE SHOULD SEEK TO LIVE OUR LIVES IN CONSTANT PRAYER, RESPONDING THROUGH OUR ACTIONS IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD, THE GREAT SPIRIT.

AS WE CHRISTIANS USE “GOD” AND “SPIRIT” TO MEAN ONE AND THE SAME CREATOR, AND TRIUNE GOD, SO WE MUST SEEK TO UNDERSTAND THE FULLNESS OF THE INDIGENOUS USE OF THE WORD, “SPIRIT,” AND SEE REVEALED ALL THAT CHRISTIANS AND TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE IN COMMON.

MUCH DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE AND CONTINUES TO BE DONE IN INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES BY EVANGELIZATION EFFORTS THAT RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER TRADITIONAL EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE FOR THE CREATOR. FAMILY BREAKDOWN RESULTS AS SOME ARE TAUGHT TO ACCEPT CHRIST IN A WAY THAT CREATES FEAR FOR THE LIVES OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS, SISTERS AND BROTHERS, AND CHILDREN WHO CHOOSE TO EXPRESS THEIR LOVE FOR GOD IN OTHER WAYS, AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYS SACRED FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

MARK MACDONALD, THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS BISHOP OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN CANADA, REMINDS US THAT ALL PEOPLES HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

AND WE ARE DEPRIVING OURSELVES OF THE PRIVILEGE OF SEEING FACETS OF GOD REVEALED, WHEN WE DEPRIVE OURSELVES OF ENCOUNTERS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON SCRIPTURE, INFORMED BY THEIR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS.

I SAID EARLIER THAT TWO PROMINENT CANADIANS HAVE COMMENTED ON THIS TOPIC RECENTLY. SHEILA FRASER, AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, ADDRESSED THE CANADIAN CLUB OF OTTAWA ON THE EVE OF HER RETIREMENT AS AUDITOR GENERAL AT THE END OF MAY: REFERENCING LIVING CONDITIONS ON RESERVES, ON THE BASIS OF THE 31 AUDIT REPORTS ON ABORIGINAL ISSUES IN HER TENURE, FRASER SAID, ‘WHAT IS

TRULY SHOCKING IS THE LACK OF IMPROVEMENT. LAST YEAR, INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA REPORTED THAT BETWEEN 2001 AND 2006 THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS IN THE WELL-BEING OF FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES. IN A WEALTHY COUNTRY LIKE CANADA, THIS GAP IS SIMPLY UNACCEPTABLE. “

“ON THE SURFACE, IT SEEMS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SIMPLY NEEDS TO WORK HARDER. . . . BUT I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE,” FRASER SAID, “THAT MORE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES ARE REQUIRED.”

STUDIES OF WHAT MAKES FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION, INCLUDING BY HARVARD UNIVERSITY, LOOKING AT AMERICAN TRIBES IN SIMILAR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS BUT WITH MARKEDLY DIFFERENT QUALITIES OF LIFE, REVEALED THAT SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION INVOLVES SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN GOVERNING AND EDUCATING THEMSELVES IN WAYS THAT GROW OUT OF AND CONFORM WITH THEIR TRADITIONS AND CULTURES. THIS INCLUDES HELPING THEM GROW THEOLOGIES OF CHRIST FROM OUT OF THEIR GOD-GIVEN TRADITIONS AND CULTURES.

TRANSFORMATION OF RELATIONSHIPS DOES MEAN ACCEPTING AND EMBRACING CHANGE AND DIFFERENCE, INCLUDING CULTIVATING AN OPENNESS TO DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS AND DIFFERENT FORMS OF EXPRESSION OF THE LOVE OF THE SAME GOD.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF RULING ELDERS IN HEALING AND RECONCILIATION?

IT IS TO LIVE OUT THE GOSPEL CALL TO BE RECONCILERS IN ALL THAT WE DO IN OUR DAY-TO-
DAY MINISTRIES AND AS WE SERVE THE CHURCH.

TO EDUCATE OURSELVES ABOUT OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE HISTORY THAT INFORMS OUR
CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS

TO SEEK JUSTICE AS WE COME TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND THE INJUSTICES THAT PREVENT
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FROM LIVING IN THE FULLNESS OF THEIR GOD-CREATED POTENTIAL IN
RELATIONS AND IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHER CANADIANS

TO USE OUR GIFTS OF LEADERSHIP AND EXHORTATION WITHIN CHURCH COURTS AND
STRUCTURES TO ENSURE THIS WORK IS PROPERLY SUPPORTED WITH OUR HUMAN AND
FINANCIAL GIFTS

AND TO BECOME CANADA'S ONGOING TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONERS,
CARRYING RESPONSIBILITY, FOR THE WORK OF BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS INTO THE FUTURE,
AND ACTING WITH SPIRITS FULL OF HOPE, COMMITTED FAITH, OVERFLOWING LOVE AND
GREAT JOY, FOR AS LONG AS THE SUN SHINES AND THE RIVERS FLOW, AS WE BUILD UP A
CHURCH THAT EMBRACES ALL.

ALL MY RELATIONS.

THANK YOU.